



The Criterion in Explaining the Issues of Imaan

Introduction

All Praise is due to Allaah, we praise Him, seek His aid and His Forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allaah from the evils of our souls and the evils of our actions. Whomsoever Allaah guides there is none to misguide and whomsoever Allaah misguides there is none to guide. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allaah, alone, without any partners and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

To proceed:

This is a serialisation of the cassette lecture of the noble shaikh, Abul-Hasan al-Misri, related to the issues of Imaan delivered last year in Ma'rab, entitled "Al-Furqaan Fee Bayaan Masaa'il il-Imaan". The gathering was recorded on two cassettes and discusses the emergence of a new sect who has deviated on the issues of Imaan. A sect called "Firqah Jins ul-Amal", the main doctrinal work in this regard being that of the unfortunate doctor in aqidah who revived the doctrine of the Mansoori Kharijites, accused the whole Ummah of Irjaa', alongside its notable Imaams and Mashaayikh.

Due to the great benefit in these cassettes, we have deemed it befitting that the contents be serialised into easy to follow lessons, such that the Sunni, Salafi, Athari, the seeker of knowledge, guidance and success may be able to tread carefully in these issues and to be aware of the great deviation and heresies entered into the ranks of Ahl us-Sunnah by the Qutubiyah, Surooriyyah ["Khaarijiyyah 'Asriyyah"], may Allaah sever them and end their evil at the hands of Ahl us-Sunnah and by the Jihaad of the tongue and pen.

Before you, Noble Reader, is the second lesson: The Sects That Have Strayed On The Issues Of Imaan.

Lesson 2: The Sects That Have Strayed On The Issues Of Imaan

Shaikh Abul-Hasan al-Misri – hafidhahullaah – said:

1. On the issues of Imaan, Ahl us-Sunnah differ with the Murji'ah regardless of whether they are the **[mainstream] Murji'ah**, that is the Murji'at ul-Fuqahaa, or the **Extremist Murji'ah**, that is the Karraamiyyah, or the **Extreme Extremist Murji'ah** such as the Ash'ariyyah and Jahmiyyah.

2. **As for the Jahmiyyah, then they say that Imaan is acquaintance (ma'rifah).** Hence, anyone who knows that Allaah is his Lord, even if he does not work the actions of the heart such as love (hubb), awe (khashyah), hope (raja'), sincerity (ikhlaas), compliance (inqiyaad), submission (khudoo'), reliance (tawakkul) and humility (tadhallul) for Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, then he is a Believer, perfect in his faith in the view of the Jahmiyyah. **On account of merely knowing that Allaah is his Lord, and even without uttering the Shahaadah with his tongue, and without doing any actions of the heart, and without any external actions of the limbs, such a one is a Believer, with complete and perfect Imaan in the view of the Jahmiyyah.** There is no doubt that such a saying is manifestly futile, for Iblees knew his Lord with his heart and announce his faith in many matters, as occurs in the Qur'aan. Likewise, the Jews know the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) as they know their own sons, yet despite that they are still Unbelievers.

3. As for the **Ash'ariyyah**, and I mean Abul-Hasan al-Ash'ariyy (in one of his sayings, although in some other places he has stated something different to this saying) and a group from among the Ash'ariyyah, then they say Imaan is assent (tasdeeq) of the heart. **Hence, whoever assented with his heart (i.e. acknowledge Allaah as his Lord) then he is a Believer, with complete and perfect Imaan.** Even if he does not utter the Shahaadah and does not work any of the other actions of the heart, such as love, awe, hope and what is similar to them, then with this assent (tasdeeq), they consider him to have perfect and complete Imaan. This saying is also manifestly false and is considered to be the view of the Extremist Murji'ah or the Extreme Extremist Murji'ah.

4. As for the **Karraamiyyah**, the followers of Muhammad bin Karraam as-Sijistaanee, then they hold that Imaan is saying only. **Hence, whoever uttered the Shahaadah with his tongue, even if he did not believe with his heart, then he is a Believer, with perfect and complete Imaan.** These can be refuted by the example of the Hypocrites, those who displayed Islaam outwardly and concealed unbelief inwardly. Allaah has judged – free is He from all imperfections, the Most High – that they will be in the lowest depths of the Hellfire. While the Karraamiyyah was the last of the sects of the Murji'ah to appear, it was the first to die out.

5. As for the Fuqahaa or the **Murji'at ul-Fuqahaa** – and amongst them are those who are called Fuqahaa Ahl us-Sunnah (the Jurists of Ahl us-Sunnah) or Murji'at Ahl us-Sunnah (The Murji'ah within Ahl us-Sunnah), then it is the saying of Abu Hanifah and whoever followed him in that. Namely, that Imaan is tasdeeq (assent) of the heart and affirmation of the tongue. However there are a number of differences between them and Ahl us-Sunnah.

Some of the people of knowledge consider these differences to be in wording only¹ whereas others consider this to be a real and actual difference². The truth is that the difference between the Murji'at ul-Fuqahaa and Ahl us-Sunnah is a difference that needs to be given consideration, that is looked into. We are not able to say that it is a difference in wording absolutely, especially since they (the Murji'at ul-Fuqahaa) forbid from making the exception (istithnaa) with respect to Imaan and especially since they do not hold that Imaan increases and decreases. This in opposition to what Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah are upon.

6. The difference between the Sunni and the Murji' in the issue of Imaan is what has been mentioned by Imaam Ahmad, Abdullaah Ibn al-Mubaarak and others, that the one who affirms that Imaan is speech and action has freed himself from the Murji'ah and that the one who affirms that Imaan increases and decreases then he has freed himself from the Murji'ah.³

7. Then there is a difference amongst Ahl us-Sunnah concerning the one who says Imaan is speech and action, that Imaan increases and decreases, **but who opposes on the issue of the exception (istithnaa)**⁴. They do not expel such a one from Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah and nor do they count him as a Murji' when he is in opposition to them on the issue of the exception (Istithnaa). There is no doubt that complete freedom from the Murji'ah is by way of all three matters. And they are

- a) the belief that Imaan is speech and action
- b) the belief that Imaan increases and decreases and
- c) the belief in the necessity of making the exception (istithnaa) in having Imaan.

¹ Amongst them Shaikh ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah as occurs in his Kitaab ul-Imaan in numerous places.

² Such as Imaam al-Albaani. Then there comes the unfortunate doctor in aqidah and accuses this Noble Imaam of falling into blameworthy Irjaa', when it can be argued that Imaam al-Albaani exposed the Murji'ah even more clearly than Shaikh ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, in that he pointed out the reality of the difference between Ahl us-Sunnah and the Murji'ah in a more clear manner(!). Indeed, these young pretenders, neither know the reality of Irjaa' and nor do they know the reality of those who they accuse of it, as was stated about their likes by Imaam Ibn Uthaimen.

³ Imaam al-Barbahari said: **Whoever says, 'Iman is speech and action, it increases and decreases' has left Irja', all of it, both its beginning and its end'**. (Sharh us-Sunnah p.132). And one before him, Imaam Ahmad was asked about the one who says 'Iman increases and decreases'. He said, **'Such a one is free from Irjaa'** (al-Mukhtar fi Usul us-Sunnah of Ibn al-Banna (p.89).

⁴ And the exception being referred to here is in reference to claiming Imaan for oneself. As for declaring someone a Shaheed, without making the exception, then that is a different matter. It is not permissible to state "Shaheed So and So" without adding to that, "Inshaa'allaah", since this is in opposition to the Sunnah and is the way of the Murji'ah. Imaam Bukhari included a chapter in the 'Book of Jihad' in his Sahih entitled, "Chapter: It is not to be said, so and so is a Shahid", and Shaikh Ibn Uthaimen gave a fatwaa in this regard, quoting from Imaam al-Bukhaaree and also stating, "It is not permissible to testify for a specific individual that he is a shaheed, even if he had been killed while performing jihad against the disbelievers. This is because this implication of this testimony is that Paradise has been testified for him, and testification for Paradise is not permissible except for those whom the Messenger (ﷺ) has given testimony for. However it can be said, "It is hoped that he is amongst the Shuhadaa"...As for when is one resolved and says "He is a Shaheed", then this is unlawful, haraam. It is not lawful to say this because this is from the matters of the unseen..." (Alfaadh wa Mafaahim Fee Meezaan il-Islam, p.18)

And making the exception is not in the sense that having doubt about the basis (asl) of one's Imaan but it is in the sense of having fear of claiming purity for one's own soul, and this is like the saying of Imaam Ahmad, "Imaan is speech and action. We have fulfilled the speech, and as for action, then Allaah knows best."

8. It is also for this reason that a difference occurred amongst Ahl us-Sunnah on the issue of making the exception (istithnaa) with respect to Islaam. So just as we say "I am a believer, if Allaah wills", then do we also say, "I am a Muslim, if Allaah wills"? A difference occurred amongst Ahl us-Sunnah and the difference returns back to the explanation of the meaning of Islaam. Whoever meant Imaan by the term Islaam, which is the way of a group from Ahl us-Sunnah such as al-Imaam al-Bukhaaree, Muhammad bin Nasr al-Marwazee and others, they consider that Imaan and Islaam have the same meaning and that whenever they are mentioned and however they are mentioned (together or apart from each other), then there is no difference between Islaam and Imaan. Hence, just as we make the exception for Imaan, we also make the exception for Imaan, in their view. And whoever holds Imaan and Islaam to have similarities and differences and that there are generalities and specific meanings unique to each of the two terms, then he makes tafseel (distinction, separation) in the matter and perhaps this is the strongest viewpoint in this issue. **That there is a difference between Imaan and Islaam.**

9. Regardless, a person who affirms these three matters, that Imaan is speech and action, that Imaan increases and decreases and who says "I am a believer, if Allaah wills", not from the angle of doubting in his Imaan, but from the angle of fear and being cautious of purifying oneself (above and beyond what it really is) [then he is free from Irjaa'].

10. So that which is of concern to us now with respect to our discussion of the issue of Imaan, the difference that has appeared in contemporary times about this "Jins ul-'Amal", then I believe that those who have opposed Ahl us-Sunnah in this issue are of numerous groupings. The **Jahmiyyah**, and you have heard their viewpoint; **al-Ash'ari and those who followed him**, and you have heard their viewpoint; the **Karraamiyyah** and you have heard their viewpoint; the **Murji'at ul-Fuquhaa** and you have come to know their viewpoint. It also became clear to us that the **Khawaarij** and the **Mu'tazilah**, those who hold that Imaan either remains in whole or disappears in whole, and hence whoever commits a major sin – in line with the specific differences that are well known between the Khawaarij and the Mu'tazilah – then such a one is either in the Hellfire eternally or is in a state between the two states of Imaan and kufr (manzalah bayna manzalatayn).

11. All of them have departed from Ahl us-Sunnah in the issue of Imaan, **and I add to them this newly-arisen sect which has begun to speak with the issue of 'Jins ul-'Amal'. I consider it to be a sect from amongst the sects that oppose Ahl us-Sunnah on the issue of Imaan.** The first group of sects are well known and the refutations of Ahl us-Sunnah against them are also well-known, because they are old and ancient sects, and Ahl us-Sunnah have spoken about them in an exhaustive and detailed manner, if Allaah wills. As for this newly-arisen sect, then if Allaah the Most High wills, this is the sect whose refutation I will try to summarise in this gathering.

COMMENTS

The Murji'ah vary in the extremity of their deviation, ranging from the Murji'ah, Extreme Murji'ah and the Extreme Extremist Murji'ah, all depending on their definition, understanding and viewpoint on Imaan.

In total, there are six sects who have strayed on the issue of Imaan:

1. The Jahmiyyah
2. The Ash'ariyyah
3. The Karraamiyyah
4. Murji'at ul-Fuquhaa
5. The Khawaarij
6. The Mu'tazilah

The closest of them to Ahl us-Sunnah are the Murji'at ul-Fuquhaa and the furthest of them are the Jahmiyyah and Ash'ariyyah. Some thought that the difference between the Murji'at ul-Fuquhaa and Ahl us-Sunnah was a difference only in wording, not meaning and import.

Stated Imaam al-Albaani (rahimahullaah), while commenting on at-Tahaawi's definition of Imaan as, "Affirmation (iqraar) with the tongue and attestation (tasdeeq) with the heart", so the Shaikh said, "I say: This is the madhhab of the Hanafi's the Maatureedees, in opposition to the majority of the Imaams such as Maalik, ash-Shaafi'ee, Ahmad, al-Awzaa'ee and others. For all of them added acting by the pillars on top of affirmation (iqraar). and attestation (tasdeeq). And the difference between these two madhhabs is not one that is related to form [while agreeing in principle], as the explainer (Ibn Abil-Izz al-Hanafi) – rahimahullaah – has opined, using the proof that they (i.e. all of them, the Hanafiyyah included) are in agreement that the one who commits major sins is not expelled from Imaan, and that he is under the will of Allaah, if He wills He will punish him and if He wills He will forgive him. For even if this agreement amongst them was correct, then if the Hanafiyyah were not in opposition to the majority of them (i.e. the Salaf) in their rejection of actions being from Imaan, they would have therefore, been in agreement with them in that Imaan is subject to increase and decrease, and that its increase is by way of obedience and its decrease by way of disobedience, while the evidences in the Book, the Sunnah and the narrations of the Salaf in this regard are in abundance. But the Hanafiyyah persisted upon this saying in opposition to all those clear and explicit evidences relating to increase and decrease, and then they began to make an unsound ta'weel (interpolation) of them, rather a futile ta'weel of them...". (Aqeedat ut-Tahaawiyyah: Sharh wat-Ta'leeq).

Then there are three issues which separate the Sunni from the Murji' and that is a) the belief that Imaan is speech and action, b) that Imaan increases and decreases and the necessity of making the istithnaa (exception) with respect to having perfect and complete Imaan. The latter point is subject to the difference that occurs amongst the scholars in relation to the meanings and applications of the terms "Imaan" and "Islam". It is also important to note that the exception (istithnaa) being referred to here, is not in relation to the asl (basis) of Imaan, in the sense one does not know whether he affirms (iqraar) or attests (tasdeeq) to the

testimonies of faith, but it is in relation to having acted upon all the requirements of the religion (i.e acted upon the whole of the Sunnah, externally and internally). However, some accused Ahl us-Sunnah as being the “Doubters” (Shakkaakiyyah) since they did not understand the nature of this exception (istithnaa) and what it was in relation to.

As for the Khawaarij and the Mu’tazilah, then their saying is well known, in that they negate Imaan completely from the one who commits a major sin, the former condemning him to Hellfire in the Hereafter, and the latter condemning him to a state between two states(!). And the basis of this bid’ah in the case of the Khawaarij and the Mu’tazilah, is in fact the very same as the basis of the bid’ah of the Murji’ah, since all of them considered Imaan to be a single entity, which is not divisible into parts.

Shaikh ul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah also said, “The Murji’ah – **in all of their variant sects** – claim that committing major sins and abandoning the outward obligatory duties do not cause Imaan to decrease. Since if anything of it went, then none of it would remain. Therefore it is but a single entity! The sinner and righteous one are equal with respect to it.” (Majmoo Fataawaa 7/223).

Finally, there is a new sect known as the Firqah of Jins ul-Amal. “Jins ul’Amal” refers to action as a whole, i.e. action in a generic sense. And this sect has argued that whoever does not have a single good deed (i.e. has not fulfilled “Jins ul-Amal”) to his credit is devoid of Imaan and is an apostate, unbeliever. Inshaa’allaah this will be explained in detail in what is yet to come from the words of the Shaikh – hafidhahullaah –, where he will illustrate that this in fact something that is an extension of the doctrine of the Khawaarij.

Before, we close there are three additional benefits, O Sunni, understand them well. The first is in relation to the difference between Imaan and Islaam. The second is in relation to the consideration of Imaan being a single entity. And the third is in relation to additional aspects in which the sects outlined above strayed and deviated – and all of that is from the words of Shaikh ul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah in his “Kitaab ul-Imaan”.

✳ **BENEFIT 1: IMAAN IS OTHER THAN ISLAAM**

Shaikh ul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah said, “The Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) indicated (in the hadeeth of Jibreel) that the religion has three ranks, of which the highest is Ihsaan, the middle is Imaan, followed then by Islaam. Thus, every Muhsin, man of Ihsaan, is a Mu’min, believer, and every believer is a Muslim. However, not every believer is a Muhsin nor is every Muslim a believer, as will be indicated inshaa’allaah.”⁵

Know also that Islam is something other than Imaan. A person possessing Islaam does not necessarily possess Imaan. A person being devoid of Imaan does not necessitate his being devoid of Islaam. Imaan is more general than Islaam. In relation to Islam, Imaan is all the acts of obedience or those things which Allaah loves and is pleased with⁶ whereas Islam signifies utterance of the two testimonies and acting upon the pillars. When used

⁵ Kitab ul-Imaan p.20 (English trans. S. H. Al-Ani, S. Tel), Imaan Publishing House, 1999. All further references to Kitab ul-Imaan will be according to the page numbers of this translation for ease of reference for the English speaking reader.

⁶ Shaikh ul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah said, “What has been stated previously indicates that the word Imaan, if applied in an absolute sense in the Qur’an and the Sunnah, implies birr (righteousness), taqwaa (piety) and

on its own, Imaan is inclusive of Islaam. When used alongside Islaam, Imaan is other than Islaam. Every Believer is a Muslim, but not every Muslim is a Believer.

Imaam al-Asbahani stated: "And we have already mentioned that Imaan is a term that signifies all of the acts of obedience and that Islaam is a term that signifies the two testimonies along with the ease of the heart (i.e. its acceptance). So when it is like this then it is obligatory to differentiate between them."

He also said, **"And Imaan and Islaam are two terms referring to two [distinct] meanings. Islaam is a term that refers to the two Shahadaahs (testimonies of belief) and assent, tasdiq, of the heart.** And Imaan is a term that signifies all of the acts of obedience. This is in opposition to the one who says that Islaam and Imaan are the same. And the evidence for the difference between them is the statement of the Most High: Verily the Muslims, men and women, the Believers men and women... (Ahzab 33:36) **So he placed Imaan after Islaam (next to it) and something is not placed straight after itself. So it is known from this that Imaan has a meaning which extends that of Islaam.**" ⁷

Shaikh ul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah said, "The real difference between Islam and Imaan, as understood from the Prophet's (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) hadith, is that Islam is din, religion. The word din is a noun of the verb dana, which means to submit and to humble oneself Accordingly, Islam means submitting to and worshiping none but Allah. Hence, whoever worships others beside Allah is not considered a Muslim. Likewise, whoever arrogantly refuses to worship Allah is not considered a Muslim. Philologists say that the word Islam means submission to Allah through the deeds of both heart and body. However, Imaan means tasdiq, assent, iqrar, verbal confession, and marifah, knowledge. Hence it refers to the profession of the heart, which in turn implies work of the heart. Accordingly, the foundation of Imaan is tasdiq, assent, verbal confession, and knowledge. Thus, it is "utterance of the heart," which implies work of the heart.

The essence in it is tasdiq, assent, and the work that is joined to it (i.e. works of the heart). For this reason, the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) interpreted Imaan as consisting of believing in the heart and its [the heart's] humility, which implies having belief in Allah, in His Angels, in His Books, and in His Messengers. Whereas he [the Prophet] interpreted Islam as a special submission [to Allah], which implies the five pillars. The Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: "Islam is outward (overt) and Imaan is in the heart." Accordingly, Islam implies overt deeds, whereas Imaan implies what is in the heart (such as): tasdiq, assent, knowledge, love, fear, and hope; and all of this is implied inwardly. However, there are some restrictions that might apply to these things. Thus, there are certain conditions that are connected with what the believer may do, on the one hand, and what the hypocrite may do, on the other. In support of this is the following hadith narrated by Abd Allah Ibn Amr and Abu Hurayrah: "A Muslim is one from whose hand and tongue the Muslims are safe. A believer is one whom people trust with their persons and property." In this hadith the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) interpreted Islam on the basis of an outward phenomena; namely, the safety of others from a Muslim. By contrast, he interpreted Imaan on the basis of something implied; namely, people's willingness to trust the believer with their lives and property. The latter [Imaan] ranks higher than the

deen (religion). For example the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) stated that "Imaan has over seventy branches, the most excellent of which is the declaration that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah, and the lowest of which is the removal of what is harmful from the road." Hence Imaan implies all of what Allaah loves." Kitab ul-Imaan p.189

⁷ Al-Hujjah Fee Bayan il-Mahajjah, (1/403-404)

former [Islam]. For if someone is trustworthy, people are safe from his hand and tongue. However, not every person from whose hand and tongue others are safe is trustworthy. On the other hand, one may not harm the people and still they may not feel safe from him. This is not a result of Imaan in his heart but rather of abandoning hurting people out of fear.”⁸

He also said, “If anyone equates Islam and Imaan by saying that Allah employs the terms Imaan and Islam to refer to the same reality, he is indeed wrong in this saying. For Allah and His Messenger interpreted Imaan as having belief in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Hereafter. Allah and His Messenger also indicated that performing what Allah commands is considered part of Imaan. However, Allah does not refer to having belief in His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, and in the Resurrection after death by the term Islam. Rather, He calls Islam submission to Allah in one’s heart and an intent, besides being loyal to religion and doing what one is commanded to do, such as establishing regular prayers and giving zakah, for the sake of Allah alone. Indeed, the latter is what He calls Islam, which He considers the only acceptable religion. Allah says: **“If any one desires a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him”** (3:85). Islam, as stated in this verse, does not include the constituents of Imaan, such as having belief in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers. Nor does it include the deeds of the heart, such as the love of Allah and His Messengers. Rather, these are considered parts of Imaan, and they characterize the believing Muslim. However, even if they do characterize him, this does not necessarily mean that they are components of Islam. Rather, they are components of Imaan. Although Imaan as well as Islam are obligations, Islam is included in Imaan. Hence, whoever fulfills the obligatory Imaan would necessarily fulfill all obligatory deeds for Islam. Also, if someone fulfills the requirements of Islam, this does not necessarily mean that he has fulfilled the requirements of Imaan, unless there is other evidence of this [that is, evidence other than the fact that he is called Muslim].

The above-mentioned verses indicate that if anyone desires a religion other than Islam, his deed will not be accepted [by Allah], and he will be a loser in the Hereafter. Accordingly, one must desire the religion of Islam only, and none other. This does not imply that what we call religion is, exactly, what we call Imaan. For Allah commands us to say: “We believe in Allah,” and He also commands us to say: “We are Muslims.” That is, He commands us to abide by these two commands. So, how can we consider them [Islam and Imaan] to be one thing?”⁹

✳ **BENEFIT 2: THE KHAWARIJ, MU'TAZILAH AND MURJ'AH HOLD ISLAAM AND IMAAN TO BE THE SAME**

Stated Shaikh ul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah, “As for the Kharijites and the Mutazilites, neither considered these types Muslims or believers, since both sects considered Islam and Imaan as one thing. Thus if they ceased to have Imaan, they did not have Islam, but the Kharijites said that they are unbelievers, and the Mutazilites said that they are neither Muslims nor unbelievers; that they are a state in between. They refer to them as manzilah bayna al-manzilatayn, they are in an in-between state.”¹⁰

He also said, “Ahmad Ibn Hanbal responded to this question in one of the two versions of his teachings, saying that Islaam is the words [testimony] one utters. Al-Zuhri says that sometimes he [Ahmad] agreed with those who

⁸ Kitaab ul-Imaan (pp./268-269)

⁹ Kitab ul-Imaan (pp. 395-396)

¹⁰ Kitab ul-Imaan (p. 248.)

hold this view, while at other times he did not. Rather, he mentions the fact that both the Book and the Sunnah support the notion that Islam is to be distinguished from Imaan. Hence, when he responded by referring to al-Zuhri's statement, al-Maymuni replied to him, saying: "Oh, Abu Abd Allah! Do you distinguish between Islam and Imaan?" "Yes," he replied. "On what basis can we argue for this view?" he asked. "Most of the hadiths provide evidence in support of this," he replied. Then he [al-Maymuni] said: "The fornicator is not a believer so long as he commits fornication, and the thief is not a believer so long as he steals." Allah says: **"The desert Arabs: Say: 'We believe.' Say: 'You have no faith; but you [only] say: We have submitted our wills to Allah."** (49:14). I then asked him: "So do you base your views on the straightforward meaning of the Book and the Sunan?" "Yes," he replied. "So what about the Murji'ites' view that Islam is an utterance?" He replied: **"They consider the Muslim and the believer (Mu'min) to be one and the same. Moreover, they view them both as having Imaan as perfect and complete as that of Gabriel."** I then asked: "Is this the basis of our argument against them?" "Yes," he said, "since Ahmad has replied that they consider the flagrant sinner to be a believer with Imaan as complete and perfect as that of the angel Gabriel." **As for his statement that the Murji'ites considered the Muslim and the believer to be one and the same, it is the view of those who hold that religion (deen) and Imaan are the same thing.** For Islam is religion, and they make no distinction between Islam and Imaan. This is the view of the Murji'ites according to many of the authoritative scholars of Islam, such as al-Shafi'ee, Abu Ubayd and others who have debated with those who take this position."¹¹

✱ BENEFIT 3: THE ERRORS OF THE MURJI'AH

Imaan is Only Tasdeeq and Knowledge of the Heart

Shaikh ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said, "The first error of the Murji'ah: **The Murji'ah thought that Imaan was mere tasdiq (assent) and ilm (knowledge), without work, state, action, will, love and humility in the heart.** This is one of the gravest errors the Murji'ah ever committed. For the works of the heart that some of the Sufis call states and ranks, are part of the obligations that Allaah and His Messenger have laid down' therefore, they are part of the Imaan that is required from us. They also include what Allaah makes desirable but not obligatory, and are therefore part of the Imaan that is not required, but merits reward by Allaah...."

He also said, "...The second aspect of the false argument of the Murji'ah is their belief **that Imaan is only in the heart (and it) is tasdiq, assent, without any works of the heart,** which has already been pointed out in the previous discussion concerning the opinion of the Jahmiyyah, who followed Jahm..."

Imaan is Utterance of the Tongue Only

Shaikh ul-Islam said, "...Whereas at a later time, some Murji'ites arrived at the view that Imaan is an utterance without tasdeeq and without the inward knowledge of the heart; this view was first introduced by Ibn Karraam, and was held by him alone..."¹² He also said, "...The second view states that Imaan is a mere utterance of the tongue. This position was not known prior to the opinions of the Karramiyyah sect...."

Disbelief is Only Through Lack of Tasdeeq and Knowledge of the Heart

He said, "... To this the author replies that the many pieces of evidence Ahmad cited in order to refute the claim of the Jahmites did not charge one with inward disbelief if one committed outward sins (i.e. lesser kufr). Rather, they said that such works signal one's unbelief by worldly standards. However, if one cited authorised pieces of evidence that affirm that, in the Hereafter, such a man is also regarded as a disbeliever (i.e. major

¹¹ Kitab ul-Imaan (pp. 368-369)

¹² Kitab ul-Imaan (p.375)

kufri), they (the Jahmites) would argue that such pieces of evidence indicate that such a man has no knowledge about Allaah. Hence, they explicitly contradicted both sound reason and Islamic legislation..."¹³

He also said, "...The second error of the Murji'ah was their belief that if the legislator (the Prophet) judges someone to be a disbeliever who will abide forever in Hellfire, then the reason would be the lack of knowledge and tasdiq, assent in his heart. In this matter, they contradicted common sense, reason and law and all that the people considered right through their natural disposition... The Jahmiyyah considered every disbeliever to be ignorant of the truth, saying that he did not know it to be true that Allaah exists. Kufr (disbelief) as they saw it, is not ignorance of just any truth, but rather ignorance of this particular truth. However, both we and everyone else know of disbelievers who are inwardly convinced that the religion of Islaam is the truth, yet they give other reasons for not having belief..."

The Imaan Required From the Muslims is Equal

He said, further on "...However, they erred in all of this from three angles: **The first is their [the Murji'ah's] assumption that the Imaan that Allah requires of us is equal for all Allah's servants, and that the belief incumbent upon one person is likewise required of another.** This assumption is false, for the followers of the earlier Prophets were required by Allah to have a kind of belief that was not required of Muhammad's community, just as the belief required of Muhammad's community was not the same as that required of still others. And the type of Imaan that was required prior to the revelation of all of the Qur'aan is different from the Imaan required after the revelation. For the Imaan required of someone who knew what the Messenger was told in detail would not be the same as that required of someone who knew what the Messenger was told in general..."

Imaan is Complete and Perfect Without Actions

He continued "...The third false argument is that they [the Murji'ah] thought that Imaan that is in the heart is complete without any works. So they regarded works as the product and necessary outgrowth of Imaan, in the rank of cause and effect, but not as an essential requirement for Imaan. And what is correct is that the complete Imaan of the heart must be accompanied by righteous works and Imaan of the heart is never perfect without them..."¹⁴

The Imaan of Everyone is the Same

Shaikh ul-Islaam continued, "...For this reason, the Murji'ah presumed the possibility of matters that never occurred due to their failure to affirm the connection between the body and the heart. For example, they said a man may have Imaan in his heart similar to that of Abu Bakr [al-Siddiq] and Umar [Ibn al-Khattab], although he neither prostrates nor fasts during Ramaadan, fornicates with his mother and his sister, and drinks wine in the daylight hours of Ramaadan. They [the Murji'ah] say that such a man has complete Imaan. On the contrary, all believers would absolutely deny such a claim."¹⁵

Imaan is Only Tasdeeq of the Heart and Expression Upon the Tongue

¹³ Kitab ul-Imaan (p.389)

¹⁴ Kitab ul-Imaan pp. 200-206.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Shaikh ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said, "And among the Murji'ah, those who said that Imaan is tasdiq, assent, in the heart and an utterance of the tongue but does not include works, was a group of jurists from Kufah. Their claims were not like those of Jahm, for they recognised that one is not a believer if, although he is able to express his belief verbally, he does not do so. They also acknowledged that Iblis, Pharaoh, and others were unbelievers despite the fact that they believed the truth in their hearts. However, if they did not include the works of the heart in their definition of Imaan, belief, they would have been obliged to adopt the view of Jahm. If, on the other hand, they did include such 'works of the hearts' in their understanding of Imaan, belief, then they would have needed to include the works of the parts of the body as well, since such outward works are necessarily associated with those of the heart."¹⁶

Imaan Does Not Decrease (or Increase) and Is a Single Entity

He also said, "The Murji'ah – **in all of their variant sects – claim that committing major sins and abandoning the outward obligatory duties do not cause Imaan to decrease.** Since if anything of it went, then none of it would remain. Therefore it is but a single entity! The sinner and righteous one are equal with respect to it."¹⁷

He also said, "Ahmad, Abu Thawr and other Muslim scholars knew the origin of the Murji'ites claim that Imaan is a single entity, such that it is untrue to say that part of it may leave while the other part stays in one's heart. For Imaan can only be one thing [that is, it cannot consist of two or three parts]. Therefore, in order to avoid the partition of Imaan, the Jahmites said Imaan is a single thing in the heart, while the Karraamites said that Imaan is a single thing on the tongue."¹⁸

The Imaan of the Heart is Complete Without Actions of the Heart

He also said, "Concerning the statement that acts of obedience are the fruits of inward tasdiq (assent), two things are meant. First, it means that acts of obedience are a necessary outgrowth of belief such that whenever inward belief is present, outward acts of obedience will also be in evidence. This is the view adopted by the pious ancestors and other Orthodox Muslims. Second, it means that inward belief may be a cause in the sense that it exists in completeness even before such acts of obedience have come into being. This is the view of the Murji'ites, the Jahmites, and others. And as we mentioned above, they are in error in three different respects. **First, they err in thinking that the belief in one's heart may be complete without the works of the heart,** such as loving and revering Allah, fearing Allah and relying on Him, and longing to meet Him..."

The Imaan of the Heart is Complete Without Outward Actions

He also said, "...**Second, they are in error by thinking that the belief that is in one's heart may be complete without outward actions.** This is the view adopted by all the Murji'ites..."

Disbelief is Due Only to Absence of Tasdeeq in the Heart

He also said, "...**Their third error is their claim that whoever is declared to be an unbeliever by the Lawgiver [i.e., the Prophet] is declared to be so because of the absence of inward tasdiq in the blessed, almighty Lord.** Many later thinkers, who tacitly agree with the Murji'ites and Jahmites' views on belief confuse the doctrines of the pious ancestors with the claims of the Murji'ites and Jahmites, and therefore make no distinction between

¹⁶ Kitab ul-Imaan (p.203)

¹⁷ Majmoo Fataawaa (7/223)

¹⁸ Kitab ul-Imaan (p. 381.)

them. Such people hold the pious ancestors and hadith scholars in great awe, and think that they are reconciling the views of the pious ancestors with the views of others.”¹⁹

He also said, “The author (Muhammad bin Nasr al-Marwazi) refutes the claims of Jahm Ibn Safwaan and his followers who believed that Imaan is mere tasdiq (assent) in the heart and knowledge in the heart, so they did not include the works of the heart as part of Imaan. Moreover, they believed that one may have true Imaan in his heart even if he reviles Allaah and His Messenger, becomes an enemy of the followers of Allaah, and becomes a supporter and friend to Allaah’s enemies; killing the Prophets, pulling the mosques to the ground, handling the Qur’an with disrespect, and showing the utmost honour to the disbelievers while treating believers with contempt. Jahm and his followers claimed that all such behaviours were merely acts of disobedience that did not nullify the belief in one’s heart. Rather, even though one does these things, he remains a believer inwardly in the sight of Allaah. However, they acknowledge that in worldly terms such a person would indeed be judged a disbeliever. This is because although by his words he may be judged outwardly to be a disbeliever, he may be inwardly other than what he professes. **Furthermore, they believed that if the Book, the Sunnah and Ijmaa (Consensus of Opinion) say that he is a disbeliever and will be punished in the Hereafter, then this indicates that he has no knowledge and no Imaan in his heart. Hence, kufr (disbelief) according to them is one thing: namely, ignorance; and Imaan is also one thing: namely, knowledge. Or (in another way) there is only Imaan or Kufr in the heart.**”²⁰

Imaan and Kufr Cannot Co-Exist in the Heart

Shaikh ul-Islam said, “It is interesting to note that the root of the Jahmites and Murji’ites mistake was their belief that Imaan and Kufr cannot exist in a single person’s heart. Abu al-Hasan al-Ash’ari stated that the Muslims unanimously agreed on this belief. However, on account of this false belief they erred. Indeed, more than one Muslim Scholar mentioned that the Salaf us-Salih agreed unanimously upon charging with kufr, those who said, like the Jahmites, that Imaan is mere tasdeeq (acceptance).”²¹

Not Excepting Oneself From Having Perfect Imaan (Istithnaa)

Abdur-Rahman bin Mahdi – may Allah have mercy upon him – said, “The basis of Irjaa’ is to not except oneself (or others from having perfect Imaan or from being guaranteed Paradise etc.)”²²

Abul-Qasim al-Asbahane said, “And it is disliked for the one who has acquired Imaan that he should say, ‘I am a believer in truth!’ or ‘I am a [true] believer in the sight of Allaah’. Rather he should say, ‘I hope I am a believer’ or ‘I am a believer if Allaah wills’ or ‘I believe in Allaah, His Angels, Books, and His Messengers’. And none of this is from the angle of doubtfulness in his Imaan, but it is from the aspect that he cannot be absolutely sure that he has fulfilled every single thing with which he has been ordered and has left everything that

¹⁹ Kitab ul-Imaan (pp. 354-355)

²⁰ Kitab ul-Imaan pp. 198-199.

²¹ Kitaab ul-Imaan (p.391)

²² Reported by al-Khallaal in as-Sunnah (1061), al-Aajuree in ash-Sharee’ah (p.139) and others. Something similar is also reported by Ibn Shahin in al-Kitab al-Latif (16) and al-Lalikaa’ee in Usul ul-I’tiqad (1835). The apparent disconnection in the chain of its Athar does not do it any damage since something similar to it has come with a connected and saheeh chain in Tahdhib ul-Aathar of at-Tabari (1519) and something similar has also been mentioned from Sufyan. Refer to al-Hilyah of Abu Nu’aym (7/33) and al-Abaateel of Jawzjaani (42).

he has been forbidden from. This is in opposition to the one who says that when a person knows from himself that he is a believer, it is permissible for him to say 'I am a believer in truth!' And the evidence for the impossibility of making this absolute claim [of perfect Imaan] and the necessity of making exception (Istithnaa) is the consensus, Ijmaa', of the Salaf. It was said to Ibn Mas'ud – may Allaah be pleased with him: "This person claims that he is a Believer? He replied, "Ask him whether he is in Paradise or in Hellfire?" So they asked him and he replied, "Allaah knows best". So Abdullaah [Ibn Mas'ud] said to him, "If only you had entrusted the affair of this life as you have entrusted the affair of the Hereafter [to Allaah]! And because it has already been established that Imaan is characterised by all the acts of obedience and the abandonment of the prohibited matters, then in that situation a person cannot be resolute that he has fulfilled all that is binding upon him and has avoided all that has been prohibited to him. Therefore, it is not possible for him to know that he is a Believer who is deserving of reward."²³

Khurooj (Rebellion) And Not Giving Obedience to the Ruler (Wali ul-Amr)

The saying or the ruling of coming out against the rulers in rebellion is also the madhhab (methodology) of the Murji'ah, for Ibn Shahin has narrated from [Sufyan] ath-Thawree that he said, **"The Murji'ah hold it permissible to use the sword against the people of the Qiblah (muslims in general)."**²⁴ He also reports that it was said to Ibn al-Mubarak, "Do you hold the view of Irja'?" He replied, **"How can I be a Murji' when I do not hold it permissible to come out with the sword (against the Muslims)."**²⁵ As-Sabuni (d.449) narrates with an authentic chain of narration going back to Ahmad bin Sa'id ar-Ribati that he said, "'Abdullah bin Tahir said to me, 'O Ahmad, certainly, you (people) have hatred of those (meaning the Murji'ah) based on ignorance, and I have hatred of them based upon knowledge. **Firstly, they do not believe that obedience is due to the (sinful) ruler...**'"²⁶

Defending the Innovators and Finding Fault With Refuting and Exposing Them

Shaikh ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah observed, "And in the face of those who perform takfir in falsehood are a people who do not know the aqidah of Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah as it truly should be known, or they know some of it but are ignorant of some of it. Yet whatever they do know of it, they do not always explain it to the people but conceal it. **And they do not forbid the innovations that oppose the Book and the Sunnah, nor do they rebuke the People of Innovations and neither do they punish them. In fact, they may even criticise absolutely any talk of the Sunnah and the fundamental principles of the religion [i.e. Tawhid etc.]. Or they may accommodate everyone, with all their varying madhhabs... This approach has overcome many of the Murji'ah, some of the Jurists, Sufis and Philosophers.** And both of these two approaches (i.e. that of the Takfiris and the Murji'ah and those with them) are deviant, and outside the [confines of the] Book and the Sunnah."²⁷

²³ Al-Hujjah Fee Bayaan il-Mahajjah (1/403/420)

²⁴ Laalika'ee in Usul ul-I'tiqad (no.1834)

²⁵ Al-Kitab ul-Latif (no. 17)

²⁶ Aqidat us-Salaf wa Ashabul-Hadith (109)

²⁷ Majmu' ul-Fatawa (16/427). And this unfortunately, was the late Bannaawi Bid'ah that Abdur-Rahmaan Abdul-Khaaliq revived, hating that the groups and sects of innovation such as Ikhwaan and Tabligh and Hizb ut-Tahrir should be refuted and exposed. And we have explained this in detail elsewhere. Refer to SCL010004, MSC050003 and GRV070005.

End of Lesson 2, walhamdulillaah. In Lesson 3, we look at the specific aspects of Imaan, speech and action, explain what they are, and the reality and nature of the Irjaa' of the Murji'ah. And may the prayers and peace be upon Allaah's Messenger, his family, his companions and those who follow him upon Tawheed and the Sunnah till the affair is established.